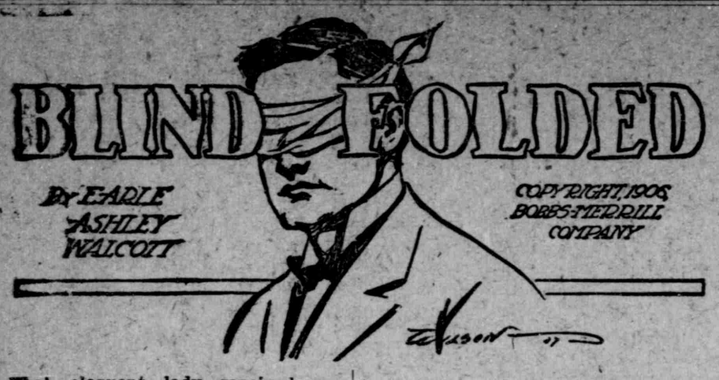

That eloquent lady received me with flutter of feathers, if I may borrow the expression, to indicate her pleasure.

"Oh, Mr. Wilton, you'll pardon my boldness, I'm sure," she said with an amiable flirt of the head, as I seated myself beside her and watched Luella melt away into the next room; "but I was afraid you had forgotten all about us poor women, and it's a dreadful thing to be in this great house when there isn't a man about, though of course there are the servants, but you can't count them as men, besides some of them being Chinamen. And we—I—that is, I really did want to see you, and we ought to have so much to talk over, for I've heard that your mother's first cousin was a Bowser, and I do so want to see that dear, delightful Chinatown that I've heard so much about, though they do say it's horrid and dirty, but you'll let us see that for ourselves, won't you, and did you ever go through Chinatown, Mr. Wilton?"

Mrs. Bowser pulled up her verbal coach-and-six so suddenly that I felt as though she must have been pitched off the box.

"Oh," said I carelessly, "I've seen the place often enough."

"How nice!" Then suddenly looking grave Mrs. Bowser spoke from behind her fan. "But I hope, Mr. Wilton, there's nothing there that a lady shouldn't see."

I hastened to assure her that it was possible to avoid everything that would bring a blush to the cheek of a matron of her years.

Mrs. Bowser at this rattled on without coming to any point. I was listening to the flow of her high-pitched voice without getting any idea from it, when my wandering attention was suddenly recalled by the words, "Mr. Knapp."

"What was that?" I asked in some confusion. "I didn't catch your meaning."

"I was saying I thought it strange Mr. Knapp wouldn't go with us, and he got awfully cross when I pressed him, and said—oh, Mr. Wilton, he said such a dreadful word—that he'd be everlastingly somethinged if he would ever go into such a lot of dens of—oh, I can't repeat his dreadful language —but wasn't it strange, Mr. Wilton?"

"Very," I said diplomatically; "but it isn't worth while to wait for him, then."

"Oh, laws, no!—he'll be home to-morrow, but he won't go."

"Home to-morrow!" I exclaimed. "I thought he wasn't to come till Wednesday."

Mrs. Bowser looked a little uncomfortable.

"I guess he's old enough to come and go when he likes," she said. But her flow of words seemed to desert her.

"Very true," I admitted. "I wonder what's bringing him back in such a hurry."

Mrs. Bowser's beady eyes turned on me in doubt, and for a moment she was dumb. Then she followed this miracle by another, and spoke in a low tone of voice.

"It's not for me to say anything against a man in his own house, but I don't like to talk of Doddridge Knapp."

"What's the matter?" I asked. "A little rough in his speech? Oh, Mrs. Bowser, you should make allowances for a man who has had to fight his way in the roughest business life in the world, and not expect too much of his polish."

"Oh, laws, he's polite enough," whispered Mrs. Bowser. "It isn't that —oh, I don't see how she ever married him."

I followed the glance that Mrs. Bowser gave on interrupting herself with this declaration, and saw Mrs. Knapp approaching us.

"Oh," she exclaimed cheerily, "is it settled? Have you made all the arrangements, Cousin Julia?"

"Well, I declare! I'd forgotten all about telling him," cried Mrs. Bowser in her shrillest tone. "I'd just taken it for a fact that he'd know when to come."

"That's a little too much to expect, I'm afraid," said Mrs. Knapp, smiling gaily at Mrs. Bowser's management. "I see that I shall have to arrange this thing myself. Will Monday night suit you, Henry?"

"As well as another," said I politely, concealing my feelings as a victim of feminine diplomacy.

"You have told him who are going, haven't you?" said Mrs. Knapp, to Mrs. Bowser.

"Laws, no! I never thought but that he knew."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Knapp. "What a gift as a mindreader Mr. Wilton ought to have! Well, I suppose I'd better not trust to that Henry. There's to be Mrs. Bowser, of course, and Mr. and Mrs. Carter, and Mr. Horton, and—oh, yes—Luella."

My heart gave a jump, and the trip to Chinatown suddenly became an object of interest.

"I mama?" said an inquiring voice, and Luella herself stood by her mother.

"Yes," said Mrs. Knapp. "It's the Chinatown expedition for Monday night."

Luella looked annoyed, and tapped her foot to the floor impatiently.

"With Mr. Wilton," there was the slightest emphasis on the words, "to accompany the party, I shouldn't think it would be necessary for me to go."

"It is either you or I," said Mrs. Knapp.

"You will be needed to protect Mr. Horton," said I sarcastically.

"Oh, what a task!" she said gaily. "I shall be ready." And she turned away before I could put in another word, and I walked down the room with Mrs. Knapp.

"And so Mr. Knapp is coming home to-morrow?" I said.

Mrs. Knapp gave me a quick look.

"Yes," she said. There was something in her tone that set me to thinking that there was more than I knew behind Mr. Knapp's sudden return.

"I hope he is not ill," I said politely.

"I think you will find him all right when you see him. But here—you must meet Mr. and Mrs. Carter. They are just from the East, and very charming people, and as you are to do them the honors on Monday evening, you should know them."

Mr. and Mrs. Carter had pleasant faces and few ideas, and as the conversational fire soon burned low I sought Mrs. Knapp and took my leave. Luella was nowhere to be seen.

"You must be sure that you are well guarded," said Mrs. Knapp. "It quite gives me the terrors to think of those murderous fellows. And since you told me of that last plot to call you down to Borton's, I have a presentiment that some special danger is ahead of you. Be cautious as well as brave."

I thanked her as she pressed my hand, and, with no Luella awaiting me by the stair, I took my way down the stone steps, between the bronze lions, and joined Porter and Barkhouse on the sidewalk.

CHAPTER XVI.
An Echo of Warning.

"All quiet?" I asked of my guards, as we took our way down the street.

"Dicky Nahl was along here," said Porter, "and he said Terrill and Meeker and the other gang was holding a powwow at Borton's, and we'd best look out for surprises."

"Was that all?"

"Well, he said he guessed there was a new deal on hand, and they was a-buzzin' like a nest of hornets."

"Well," said I, "we had better go down to Borton's and look into this matter."

There was silence for a time. My guards walked beside me without speaking, but I felt the protest in their manner. At last Barkhouse said respectfully:

"There's no use to do that, sir. You'd better send some one that ain't so likely to be nabbed, or that won't matter much if he is. We'd be in a pretty fix if you was to be took."

"Here comes Dicky now," said Porter, as a dark figure came swinging lightly along.

"Hullo!" cried Dicky, halting and shading his eyes from the gaslight. "I was just going up to look for you again."

"What's up, Dicky?"

"I guess it's the devil," said Dicky, so gravely that I broke into a laugh.

"He's right at home if he's come to this town," I said.

"I'm glad you find it so funny," said Dicky in an injured tone. "You was scared enough last time."

"Well, I've kept out of his claws this far, and it's no use to worry. What's he trying to do now?"

"That's what I've been trying to find out all the evening. They're noisy enough, but they're too thick to let one get near where there's anything going on—that is, if he has a fancy for keeping a whole skin."

"Suppose we go down there now," I suggested. "We might find out something."

Dicky stopped short.

"Caesar's ghost!" he gasped; "what next? Wouldn't you like to touch off a few powder-kegs for amusement? Won't you fire a pistol into your mouth to show how easy you can stop the bullet?"

"Why, you have been down there and are all right," I argued.

"Well, there nothing much to happen to me, but where would you be if they got hold of you? You're getting off your cabesa, old fellow," said Dicky anxiously.

"If I could see Mother Borton I would fix it," I said confidently.

"What! That she-devil?" cried Dicky. "She'd give you up to have your throat cut in a minute if she could get a four-bit piece for your carcass. I guess she could get more than that on you, too."

Mother Borton's warnings against Dicky Nahl returned to me with force at this expression of esteem from the young man, and I was filled with doubts.

"I came up to tell you to look out for yourself," continued Dicky. "I'm afraid they mean mischief, and here you come with a wild scheme for getting into the thick of it."

"Well, I'll think better of it," I said. "But see if you can find out what is going on. Come up and let me know if you get an inkling of their plants."

"All right," said Dicky. "But just sleep on a hair-trigger to-night."

"Good-night," I said, as I turned toward my room, and Dicky, with an answering word, took his way toward the Borton place.

I had grown used to the silent terrors of my house. But as we stumbled up the stairway the apprehensions of Dicky Nahl came strong upon me, and I looked ahead to the murky halls, and glanced at everyway as though I expected an ambush. Porter and Barkhouse marched stolidly along, showing little disposition to talk.

"What's that?" I exclaimed, stopping to listen.

"What was it?" asked Barkhouse, as we stopped on the upper landing and gazed into the obscurity.

"I thought I heard a noise," said I. "Who's there?"

"It was a rat," said Porter. "I've heard 'em out here of nights."

"Well, just light that other gas jet," I said. "It will help to make things pleasant in case of accidents."

The doors came out of the darkness as the second jet blazed up, but nothing else was to be seen.

Suddenly there was a scramble, and something sprang up before my door. Porter and I raised the revolvers that were ready in our hands, but Barkhouse spring past us, and in an instant had closed with the figure and held it in his arms.

(To be continued.)

DEADLY POISONS.

One Whiff of Pure Prussic Acid Is Sufficient to Kill.

The discoverer of prussic acid was instantly killed by inhaling one whiff of his own handiwork.

Pure prussic acid is never sold or handled. The smell of it is always fatal. It kills not in three minutes or half an hour, but the instant it enters the lungs as a gas. The mixture ordinarily sold as prussic acid is 98 parts water to two parts of the drug. Even in this form it is very deadly. A 20 per cent mixture of the acid would kill nearly as quickly as if pure.

Atropine, though it has no harmful odor, is so deadly that as much of it as would adhere to the end of a moistened forefinger would instantly cause death.

Cyanide of potassium has a pleasant smell which is not injurious, but a small quantity swallowed kills at once.

Pure ammonia if inhaled would cause death almost as quickly as prussic acid.

When a carboy of nitric acid is broken some one has to suffer. It will burn wood, eat through iron plates and destroy whatever it touches. Such an accident once happened in an acid factory. Every one ran away, leaving the acid to amuse itself by setting fire to things. Soon it was seen that the building would be destroyed and hundreds of people thrown out of work, and four men volunteered to put out the fire in the acid room. They succeeded and came out all right. Five hours later all were dead.

His Gallantry.

"See that man who just gave his seat to a young woman?" queried an elevated railroad passenger. "Queer case that. Never encountered one before just like it.

"He's not a New Yorker, he is not a ready maker of friends, and he is so diffident where women are concerned that he really has not one among his acquaintances, with the possible exception of a landlady and a laundress.

"Yet the fellow has a longing for feminine recognition. I happen to know that he always relinquishes his seat to a woman where the opportunity is presented, and I also know that his only reason for doing so is the hope of receiving a smile and a 'Thank you' in return. It's like a bone to a hungry dog. Queer case, don't you think?"—New York Globe.

The Suicide Symphony.

The idea that music may be harmful—that it can create a fever in the blood dangerous to life and reason—will come as a revelation to many. Friedrich Nietzsche, the well known German philosopher, declares that there is something in some music, most notable in Wagner and Tschaikowsky, which acts unfavorably on the brain and nerves of many people. Tschaikowsky's baleful influence cannot be denied. He destroyed himself after composing his famous "Sixth Symphony," and, as several have died by their own hand after playing it, it has come to be known as the "suicide symphony."

Extravagant.

Stranger (in Drearyhurst)—Is there a place here where I can get a square meal? Uncle Welby Gosh—Yes, sir. There's a restur'nt round the cawner where you can git the best meal this side o' Chicago if you don't mind its bein' a leetle expensive. They'll sock you for 35 cents, but, by gum, it's wuth it!—Chicago Tribune.

Luck.

"Do you believe in such a thing as luck?"

"Of course," answered Miss Cayenne. "Otherwise it would be impossible to explain the success of people we don't like!"—Washington Star.

Troubles of the Inanimate.

"Tough old world this," sighed the anvil. "I get nothing but hard knocks all day long."

"Yes," assented the bellows, "and I am always hard pressed to raise the wind."—Boston Transcript.

Some Secrets Carefully Hidden.

One may be familiar for years with the reception room of his neighbor, and never suspect that he is directly under his mansard.—Aldrich.

THE COOKING TIME TABLE.

Periods That Should Be Allowed for the Various Dishes.

Bacon, fried in its own fat, two to three minutes. Chops, breaded, five to eight minutes. Croquettes, one minute. Doughnuts, three to five minutes. Fish balls, one minute. Fish, breaded, five to eight minutes. Fish, small, two to five minutes. Fritters, three to five minutes. Potatoes, two to five minutes. Brown bread should be steamed for three hours. Puddings, from two to three hours, and rice, 45 to 60 minutes.

Time Table for Broiling Meats and Fowls.—Bacon, four to eight minutes. Birds, six to eight minutes. Chicken, 15 minutes per pound. Chops, six to eight minutes. Small, thin fish, five to eight minutes. Thick fish, 12 to 15 minutes. Liver, four to eight minutes. Squab, ten to 15 minutes. Steak, one inch thick, six to eight minutes. Steak, 1½ inches thick, eight to ten minutes. Tripe, four to eight minutes.

Time Table for Roasting Meats.—Braised beef, three to four hours. Fillet of beef, 30 minutes. Roast beef rare, 12 to 14 minutes per pound. Chicken, one to one and one-half hours. Duck, 18 minutes. Take duck, one to one and one-half hours. Mutton, one and a quarter to one and one-half hours. Pork, two to three hours. Turkey, two to three hours, or 15 minutes per pound. Veal, two to three hours.

The Home.

Put a few drops of oil of lavender in bookcases to prevent mildew on the books.

Oatmeal put to soak in water the night before only requires about one-half the time to cook.

It is best not to have carpets on the bedroom floors; use rugs instead. These can easily be cleaned.

Celery should lie at least half an hour in cold water or upon ice before serving in order to be firm and crisp.

Stuffed olives chopped fine, mixed with cream cheese and made into balls are delicious if served with a plain salad.

Chicken salad is delicious if mixed with small pieces of green pepper and mayonnaise. Press the meat into pepper cases.

When starching children's pinafores add a small piece of sugar to the boiled starch. This will make them iron more easily, and leave a beautiful gloss on them.

Stockings should not be washed in the same water which has been used in washing white clothes, as they are apt in that case to become covered with lint.

Delicious Potato Ring.

A potato ring promises to live long as a substantial resort in time of need. Harper's Bazar says: "This makes an exceedingly nice dish for either a family luncheon or dinner. It is attractive to the eye, besides affording a good opportunity for economy. The mashed potato should be reheated in a little milk or cream and placed in a pan set into hot water. While these are heating cut the left-over fowl or meat into small pieces and reheat in the gravy. When ready to dish, whip into the potato the stiffly whipped white of one egg, and then place tablespoonfuls around the meat. A garnish of parsley adds to the good effect, and tufts of this or of celery foliage may be placed around the base. Should there be any onions left over they can be reheated with the meat and gravy.

Warmed Over Dishes.

Peas and cabbage may be warmed over in the following way: Butter a small mold or basin, put in the article to be warmed and place some pieces of butter on the top, cover with a saucer and put into the oven until sufficiently hot.

New potatoes are troublesome to reheat; the best way is to measure them out before scraping, so that none may be left. This is not always possible however; if any are ltft they may be put into the steamer and made hot, covering them with a cloth instead of the saucepan lid.

Delicious Dessert.

One cup of white sugar, three tablespoonfuls of grated chocolate, five tablespoonfuls of grated bread crumbs, three eggs, one good pint of sweet milk; add a little salt and vanilla to taste. Mix the sugar and the yolks of the eggs thoroughly, then add the bread, then the chocolate, and lastly the milk. Bake about 20 minutes, then cover with the whites of the eggs well beaten, mixed with three tablespoonfuls of sugar. Put back into oven until brown.

Raisin Light Biscuits.

Take a lump of light dough ready to make down, shorten with a lump of butter, about a tablespoonful to a pint of dough and let it rise as for light biscuits. Flour the rolling board well and roll the dough about half an inch thick. Spread thickly with melted butter, sprinkle with sugar, raisins and cinnamon. Roll up, and with a sharp knife cut off pieces about an inch thick. Bake in a moderate oven.

Pickled Grapes.

Pick fresh grapes from the stems without breaking, and put in a jar. For seven pounds grapes, allow a quart of vinegar, three pounds of sugar, a tablespoonful each of whole cloves and cinnamon sticks. Cook vinegar, sugar and spices together a few moments. Cool to a little hotter than lukewarm and pour over the grapes, which are not to be cooked. Cover and set in a cool place.

A Bank on Two Legs.

"For more than thirty years the most popular woodsman's bank in Maine was a bank on two legs," says Major Holmes Day, author of "King Spruce." "Until he was over seventy years old Uncle Nate Swan was conductor on the Bangor and Piscataquis railroad, running between the city and Moosehead lake. With him rode the woods and driving crews. When they forgot themselves and made a racket on his train he used to cuff them into submission, and no man ever raised his hand against Uncle Nate. When the men came out of the woods with their pay most of them realized from bitter experience that the city folks would get all their money away from them in a few days. As soon as they would get aboard the train they would begin to strip ten dollar bills off their rolls and hand the money to Uncle Nate to 'sink' for them, banking it on call. They never forgot, nor did he, and in all the years there was never a dispute between Conductor Swan and any of his depositors. When they came back on his train they were sure of enough money for their fare and their tobacco at the lake outfitting store. They wouldn't have known very well what to do with more."

Her Ideal Villain.

The following anecdote, taken from "My Story," by Hall Caine, is interesting:

Immediately after the production of "The Woman In White," when all England was admiring the arch villainy of Fosco, the author, Wilkie Collins, received a visit from a lady who congratulated him upon his success with somewhat icy cheer and then said: "But, Mr. Collins, the great failure of your book is your villain. Excuse me if I say you really do not know a villain. Your Count Fosco is a very poor one, and when next you want a character of that description I trust that you will not disdain to come to me. I know a villain and have one in my eye at this moment that would far eclipse anything that I have ever read of in books. Don't think that I am drawing upon my imagination. The man is alive and constantly under my gaze. In fact, he is my own husband."

The lady was the wife of Edward Bulwer Lytton.

Fixed Bayonets In London.

The privilege of marching through London with fixed bayonets is enjoyed by but very few regiments, such as the Royal fusileers, who trace their origin to Cromwell's trained bands, which in later years produced so famous a captain as John Gilpin. After the Royal fusileers, or perhaps even before them in point of regimental seniority, come the East Kent "Buffs," now the third of the line, who claim a similar city ancestry, while the Royal marines for some reason or other also enjoy the same fixed bayonet rights in the city. A battalion of the grenadier guards was once impressed to serve as marines, and hence they share the privilege of the men who are "soldiers and sailors too." This also explains why that grenadier battalion has for its tattoo "Rule Britannia"—as a souvenir of the time when its combative existence was of the amphibious kind.—London Standard.

Public Credulity.

After making full allowance for the increased spending power of the masses, figures prove conclusively that notwithstanding the wide diffusion of knowledge, the spread of education and the raising of the standard of intelligence among the people, the appeal of the quack and the charlatan to the credulity of the public meets with a readier response than ever.—London Hospital.

The Winchester News is delivered by carrier at 10 cents per week.